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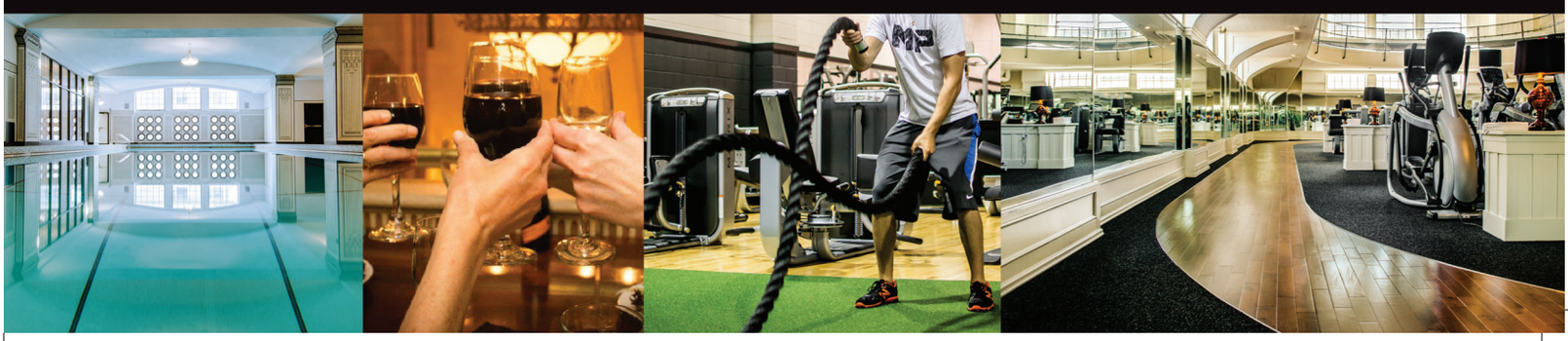
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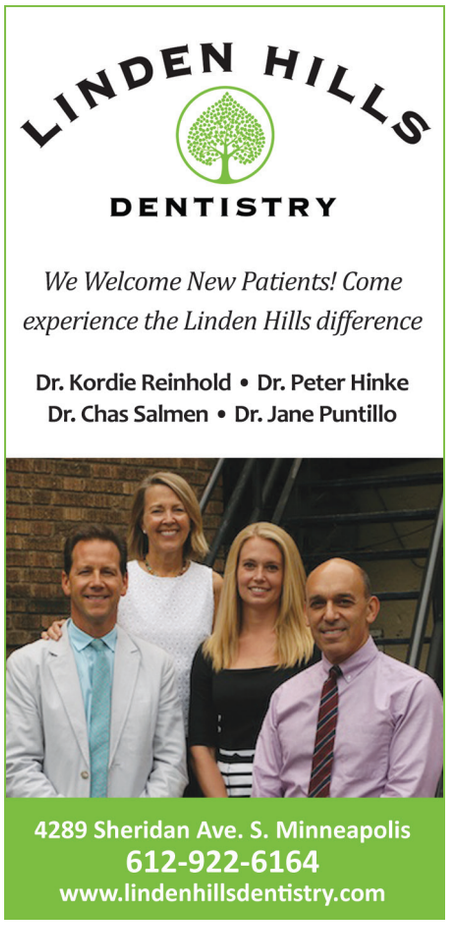
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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

New Year, New Intentions

Lately, I've seen a little backlash against the idea that the difference of a day on a calendar from 2016 to 2017 means that the world starts fresh and new. I agree, it's a little arbitrary to say that everything changed when I woke up on January 1, but it's still a nice concept that we get a little refresher every year. A slight reset. Calories still count the same. Bills still cost the same. Politics are still as they are. The people you see every day are hopefully still there (or not). A job maybe gets a little breather after having a day off, if you get one. It's a way for us to reframe and shift our thinking a little. And it's a time to remind ourselves that we do have some control over our worlds. We can approach things from a new perspective. Our habits can be shifted a bit. We can intentionally change lanes. And we can be healthier in body, heart, and mind.

This issue may seem like a bunch of events. Some cool clothes. A funky new place to eat and spend hours indoors, having fun with other people. But look at the piece on seasonal depression and let that frame a bit of this issue for you too. As we start this new year, the days are already getting longer, but the air is still cold and biting. It's a time when we burrow into our insular worlds a little more, something that can be detrimental to our well-being. I tell you, my world with my dog, Grendel, can be pretty small and stifling if I stay in it too long. I'm not a full-on extrovert, but I can actually feel my body become restless when I haven't seen anyone but my dog in too long a time. If you're at all similar to me, you can look at this issue as a guide for how to make sure we get out there and stay engaged in the world. And, as my people the Norwegians say (I'm sure it's not just their saying), "there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes." So bundle up and be weather aware, and get out there.

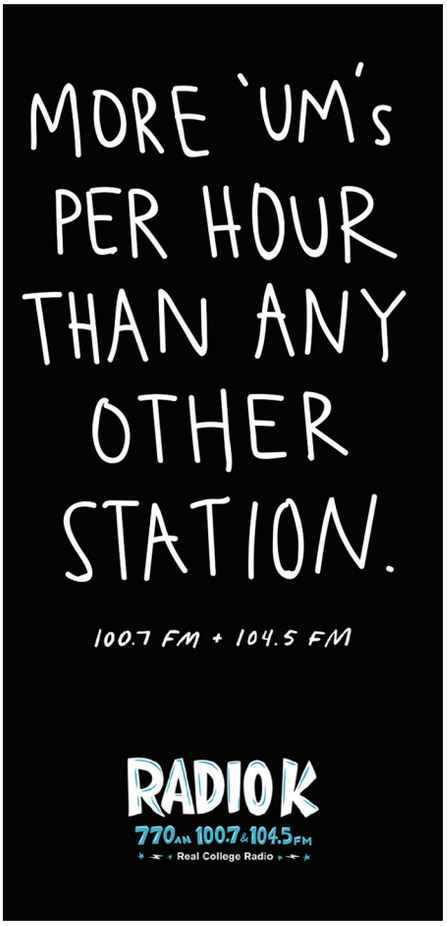
And, please, keep an eye on each other. Reach out. Check up. Drop by. Answer the phone. Heck, dial the phone. Extend yourself. Considering how many in this community surround themselves with chosen family rather than blood relations, it's important to be there. Be each other's keeper, particularly when the days are dark and cold. Especially when the weather might forecast a "cold with a chance of dismal."

With you and with warmth,

Andy ■







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LAVENDER'S DECEMBER FIRST THURSDAY AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL ST. PAUL

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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Christmas Caveats and New Year Wishes

"Bah! Humbug!" snarls Ebenezer Scrooge, responding to a request for Christmas charity for the poor. "Are there no prisons?… And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?"

First published in 1843, Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* still brings a tear to the eye, but underneath the moral transformation of the old skinflint, however, lurks the eternal drama of families at holiday time.

Dickens contrasted Scrooge's bile with the love and warmth of Bob Cratchett, Scrooge's employee, and his family celebrating joyfully despite the possibly fatal illness of young Tim, and the cheerfulness of his nephew, Fred, happily married and still reaching out to his uncle. Scrooge lucks out after visions of an inevitable dark future displayed by Christmas ghosts turn him into a happy, tradition-loving man.

In addition to the Guthrie's latest production of *Carol*, there was also the production down the hall of James Goldman's *The Lion in Winter*. On the McGuire Proscenium stage it was also Christmas: Chinon, France, 1183. Not one Scrooge there, but an entire family of royal dysfunctionals to delight and appall. Father, Henry II, and Mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, let out of her dungeon hold for the holidays, cozy up with their three squabbling monarch-wannabe sons and Alais Capet, 23, mistress of the 50-year-old Henry. What could go wrong? The play is not a historical drama but Goodman's fictionalized look into 12th-century domestic turmoil, a *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* on the parapets — and equally compelling.

The Guthrie's co-staging of the two provided the viewer food for thought about his or her own home relationships, and just what it is that makes families stick together, even if one member is kept imprisoned.

Scrooge pranced jubilantly into the light, while Henry and Eleanor (in Goodman's version) moved their chess pieces right to the end; check and no mate. As Eleanor was about to be shipped back to England, Henry spoke: "We're in the cellar and you're going back to prison and my life is wasted and we've lost each other and you're smiling." Eleanor, never at a loss for words, replied, "It's the way I register despair. There's everything in life but hope."

Now that you've survived the holidays, remember in this new year: Hold your family close and watch your back. ■

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HEALTH & WELLNESS | BY SHANE LUECK

Seasonal Depression: Defeating the Winter Blues

The days are shorter, weather is colder, and more people are inclined to stay home rather than bundle up to get together with friends and family. While pop culture is currently glorifying staying home by yourself with a blanket and Netflix, there is also a dark underbelly to this trend.

Seasonal Affective Disorder or "depression with a seasonal pattern" is considered a subtype of major depression. According to psychotherapist Julie Childs, one criteria for diagnosing depression with a seasonal pattern includes depression that begins and ends during a specific season every year, usually beginning in the fall and continuing through the winter months. Additionally, these experiences must be present for at least the last two years.

"One of the possible causes attributed to seasonal depression is the shorter daylight and sunlight hours that occur in the fall and winter months," Childs explains. "This decrease in sunlight affects people differently and can disturb your body's internal clock. This disturbance can lead to feelings of depression. Also, reduced sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin levels. Simply stated, serotonin is a brain chemical that affects mood. These lower levels of serotonin may contribute to depression symptoms."

With the distance away from the equator, Minnesotans may be impacted more than people in southern states due to the shorter daylight hours. Statistics indicate the prevalence of seasonal depression in Florida is 1.4 percent and in Alaska it is 9.9 percent. "Seasonal depression is very common," Childs says. "Although much less common and talked about, there are people who can experience seasonal depression in the spring and summer months."

Seniors can be especially prone, Child says, because of physical issues that limit their ability to get outdoors as much in the winter months to take advantage of what little daylight there is. For example, some may have mobility issues that make them unsafe on snow and ice, while others may have hesitancy to drive in the dark or winter weather. Hesitancy or inability to leave their home may lead to isolation which may exacerbate the seasonal depression symptoms, especially in the senior GLBT population.

"Seniors certainly may be impacted differently than other stages in life," Childs says. "In the winter months this isolation may only worsen due to not being able to leave the home as often. Also, social withdrawal is one of the symptoms of seasonal depression which can make it even more difficult for seniors to reach out to others. Making positive connections and forming and maintaining relationships with others may be helpful for combating isolation and lessening the symptoms of depression."

As Childs explains, isolation for seniors may be a major factor in depression, but particularly so for GLBT-identified individuals who may have been isolated from their families because of their identity. "If isolation is an issue, it may be difficult for someone to seek help or for others to know there is even a problem," she continues. "Isolation may certainly worsen seasonal depression and, as mentioned previously, it can contribute to experiencing a depressed mood and having little or no energy."

Thankfully, seasonal depression can be treated in a number of ways, beginning with recognizing if you are experiencing depression with a seasonal pattern and identifying your specific symptoms as a first step. Distinguishing between depression with a seasonal pattern and other types of depression is an important process to determine treatments.

One of the primary treatments for treating seasonal depression is called "light therapy," which involves exposure to a specific type of artificial light that Childs describes as being brighter than indoor light, but not as bright as sunlight. "Other treatments for seasonal depression include forming connections with others and asking others for help when needed," Childs says. "It's also important to pay attention to your sleep patterns and diet/nutritional needs. Not getting enough sleep, making poor food choices (such as eating too many sweets or consuming too much alcohol) may exacerbate the symptoms."

Due to a possible drop in serotonin levels as a result of reduced sunlight in the winter, Childs suggests exercise as part of treating seasonal depression. Numerous studies indicate that exercise has shown to increase both serotonin production and release, which is important in improving mood and raising the serotonin levels. Some studies even indicate that exercise may be as effective as taking anti-depressant medication. With any exercise plan it is always advisable to consult with your physician on what plan is best for you.

Finally, if someone is having difficulty reaching out to others, having difficulty with self-care, or experiencing worsening symptoms, Childs suggests that it may be helpful for the individual to seek professional assistance from a therapist. She says, "Talk therapy can be a helpful treatment for seasonal depression. If day-to-day functioning is significantly impaired, medications prescribed by an appropriate health care professional may also be considered."

For friends and family of those impacted by seasonal depression, Childs says it's important to reach out to seniors with seasonal depression by making direct contact with them. Make frequent phone calls to check in, stop by the person's home, and make social plans. Making a meaningful connection with a senior during this time is more important than a specific activity.

If you are experiencing depression with a seasonal pattern, it's important to know there is an end in sight as the seasons change. "If you have noticed an annual pattern of seasonal depression in the fall/winter months, it may be helpful for you to spend some time in the spring and summer months to prepare for the annual seasonal change," Childs says. "In the summer, when you have more energy, improved concentration, and are not experiencing a depressed mood, you probably will be more effective in putting a plan in place to prepare for and cope with the seasonal change. Additionally, if you continue to experience depression after the typical seasonal pattern, you may want to seek help to determine if you are experiencing another type of depression. Remember the importance of reaching out to others and making meaningful connections throughout the year." ■

Julie Childs, MSW, LICSW, LADC can be reached at 651-783-5656 or jchildstherapy@gmail.com.

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Out There 2017. Photo by Maria Baranova

OUT THERE 2017

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The Walker Art Center's Festival of Performance Alternatives revels in dance in this new year and plugs into up-to-the-minute trends and movements happening in performing arts today. It is also a showcase of Bessie Award-winning performers, a major award for dance innovation.

First offering: From New York's downtown theater scene comes an existential meditation that speaks to the current craze for quantum physics ideas and the theory of relativity in performance. *YOUARENOWHERE* (through Jan. 7) is Andrew Schneider's creation that reflects parallel universes, missed connections, and even the culture of Alcoholics Anonymous. The performance space is said to be something undefinable in terms of our three-dimensional way of seeing and the work warps our sense of linear time.

For week two: Bessie Award-winner Faye Driscoll's *Thank You for Coming: Play* (Jan. 12–14), the second part of her *Thank You for Coming* trilogy, looks at how we find coherence in how we consume and fabricate personal stories. Glitches and gaps, both physically and vocally, between what we say and what we do, are revealed.

Week three: In *Poor People's TV Room* (Jan. 19–21) Bessie-winner Okwui Okpokwasili explores what is referred to as collective amnesia regarding Nigerian women's movements. It goes from the Igbo Women's War of 1929 to the recent Boko Haram kidnappings. Four female performers create a ritualistic and hallucinogenic dystopian narrative. Complete with ghosts and time-bending.

Fourth and final week: *Le Melancolie des Dragon*s (Jan. 26–28) from Philippe Quesne/Vivarium Studio features six metal-heads on a quest to build a hard rock-themed amusement park. Described as a surreal fairy tale that protests consumerism, it uses 1980s rock and medieval recorders for its effect.

WHAT THE ELF!?

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The region's premiere place for comedy revues continues its hot-selling holiday hit well into the new year. You may be surprised at how few pot shots, practically none the night I saw it, about the current political turmoils. Rather than that, *What the Elf!?* spoofs commercialization and political correctness in how we look at holidays.

Parodies of standard David Bowie classics become Christmas versions. Ryan Nelson is sensational in a vignette called *Social Anxiety*, in which every interaction he makes causes a traumatic side effect. It's what you could call a mini-classic in its own right, reminiscent of Broadway musical comedy tune. Dynamic Denzel Belin joins the cast and reels in the laughs with BNW veteran Tom Reed in the vignette, *The Game of Life*, where different skin color makes for different board games; hence different rules; hence, different advan-



Camelot. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

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tages and disadvantages. Indeed, this revue will still pack a punch in our post-holiday winter, when laughter is a nice tonic for the dreary cold weather.

CAMELOT

Through Feb. 25
Chanhassen Dinner Theatres
501 W 78th St., Chanhassen
952-934-1547
www.chanhassendinnertheatres.com

Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe tapped into the highest ideals of the Middle Ages with *Camelot*. Theater artists can easily make hay with this musical classic by virtue of its period costumes and marvelous songs, which, if well sung, will make for a pleasing production. Recall *The Merry Month of May* and *I Loved You Once in Silence*.

However, Chanhassen Dinner Theatres has taken the artistic leap necessary to make *Camelot* into not just a well-sung, attractive production, but a work of great theater that plunges the audience into the psychic currents of medieval thought and morality and the majesty of a gorgeous score and lyrics. To watch this *Camelot* you don't have to be aware that that is what is working on you as it permeates your mind and heart. But you will know that you've been struck by artistic lightning, in a spine-tingling way.

The legend of King Arthur's effort to evolve humanity beyond wanton destruction, coined as "might is right" into the use of "might for right", was a noble concept that, even now, we have yet to incorporate. Keith Rice is profoundly moving as Arthur, the prophet of this radical notion. And this vibrant actor sings magnificently. Rice is complemented by the stately and effervescent Helen Anker as Guinevere. Not only is her voice a wonder, but she subtly yet vividly portrays the woman's shift from a carefree life where love is simple and defined, into a painfully human figure torn between her duty to Arthur and her passion for Arthur's supreme knight, Lancelot. We feel the forces of medieval shame and the Seventh Commandment weighing, but at the same time, the natural feeling of love and adoration for such a noble figure as Lancelot. And to be sure, Aleks Knezevich embodies that brilliantly.

Surely the force that makes for such a deeply felt production must be director Michael Brindisi. He has worked some kind of "Merlin-esque" magic that delivers this staging into the dimension of the Middle Ages and keeps the show clawing and gnawing at our heartstrings as if we are also participating in the dilemma of the love triangle ourselves. And speaking of Merlin, David Anthony Brinkley brings depth, wit, warmth, and wisdom to the magician.

Rich Hamson's costumes are sumptuously and specifically medieval. Tamara Kangas Erickson's choreography and Andrew Cooke's music direction elicit the textures and the feelings that Lerner & Loewe intended when they premiered the piece in 1960. Almost 60 years later, the Chanhassen production validates that *Camelot* is a theatrical work that transcends and endures. I have never seen such a superior interpretation of this great musical.



The Bodyguard. Photo by Joan Marcus

THE BODYGUARD

Jan. 10–15
Orpheum Theatre
910 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
800-982-2787
www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org

The stage musical version of the 1992 Whitney Houston film was nominated for four Olivier Awards (London's equivalent of the Tony) and its national tour stars the acclaimed Deborah Cox. *The Bodyguard* is also timely because it looks at power differences between employer and employee and may not lead you to the conclusions you anticipate.

When a former Secret Service agent-turned-bodyguard is hired to protect a superstar from a stalker, there is an actual power play between the agent and the artist. However, in the process they fall in love. *The Bodyguard* is described as a romantic thriller and includes many beautiful tunes including the classic "I Will Always Love You," which became a blockbuster hit for Houston, and was originally written and recorded by Dolly Parton several years before then.

That's why it is so pleasing to hear about the casting of Grammy-nominated Cox. Not only is she renown for her rhythm and blues brilliance but she has an exceptional Broadway background as the lead in Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* in 2004, as well as playing in *Jekyll & Hyde* in 2013.

Moreover, Cox has been very active in GLBT issues. Last year she was given the Liberty Bell and Proclamation in Philadelphia by the mayor to proclaim June 12 as LGBTQ Philadelphia Pride Parade and Festival Day. In 2015 she won the Out Music Pillar Award, as well as The Harvey Milk Foundation Diversity Honors for her work to fight HIV/AIDS in the LGBTQ community. In 2014 she received the California State Senate Award and in 2007 she received the Civil Rights Award from the New York Senate for Human Rights and Equality. ■

2017
NEMAA & Public Functionary Present
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01.28 | 02.11
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Jan 28th, 2017 at 7pm
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WHAT TO DO

By Shane Lueck

OUT THERE 2017

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
Through Jan. 28
$79.50 package for all four shows, $25 individually
www.walkerart.org

Intent on flipping expectations and blurring lines, Out There brings some of the world's most intriguing experimental theater and performance works to the Twin Cities. Beginning as a modest two-weekend series, it has grown into a full-fledged monthlong festival featuring new global performances, workshops, dialogue sessions, salons, and other activities.

ROOFTOP WINTER WONDERLAND DISPLAY

Betty Danger's Country Club
Through Jan. 31
$8
www.bettydangers.com

Celebrate this magical season with a hot drink in your hand and a little nostalgia on your mind. Take a seat on Betty Danger's revolving patio, snuggle up with blankets and gaze at the rooftop holiday light display. It's like a romantic sleigh ride in the sky! Vintage holiday decorations will take you right back to the days of real five and dime stores. It's like stepping into another era. Cost of admission includes a hot chocolate or cider. And for an extra $2, you can add a spike to your drink!

WELLS FARGO WINTER SKATE

St. Paul
Through Feb. 5
$4 skate rental (free with Wells Fargo check card or credit card)
www.wellsfargowinterskate.com

The historic Landmark Center creates a beautiful backdrop for the outdoor rink in the heart of downtown St. Paul.

INDOOR SKATING AT THE DEPOT

Milwaukee Road Depot, Minneapolis
Through March 11
$9 adults, $6 children, $7 skate rental
www.thedepotminneapolis.com

This indoor skating rink has a wall of glass offering views of the downtown skyline.

ICE CASTLES

Stillwater
Through mid-March, weather permitting
$7–$13
www.icecastles.com

By day this frozen wonderland glimmers with glacial blues and frosty whites. After dark the ice formations glow multi-colored with the help of thousands of LED lights within the ice. Notice the location change this year from Eden Prairie to Stillwater.

WINTER FARMERS MARKETS

Minneapolis and St. Paul
Through April 8
www.mplsfarmersmarket.com, www.stpaulfarmersmarket.com

Retain the ability to shop locally through the winter! You will find a wide variety of meat items, cheese, honey, bakery goods, strudel,



jams and jellies, pickled items, chocolates, mustard and hot sauces, peirogies, apples, and seasonal decorating items.

CAPITOL TOURS

Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul
Free
www.sites.mnhs.org

The State of Minnesota is wrapping up a $310-million project to preserve the 1905 State Capitol, including the restoration of its extensive and amazing artwork. Learn about new artwork interpretation and decisions that will provide a greater opportunity for all Minnesotans to learn about the state's history. Take a free tour of this working building, from renovations to history, and be sure to mark your calendar for the grand opening celebration, Aug. 11–13!

SPORTSOLOGY

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
Opens Jan. 6
$13 adults, $10 children museum admission
www.smm.org

Originally designed by the Science Museum of Minnesota for the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas, Texas for its grand opening in 2012, Sportsology is built from the ground up here in Saint Paul. Can you outrun a Tyrannosaurus rex or throw a football better than a pro? Visitors will get ready, get set, and get active as they explore their bodies in motion. In Sportsology, the brand new addition to the museum, every field, court, track, and gym becomes a science lab! Discover the importance of physiology, physics, and nutrition in active play, then challenge friends to a race, race a professional athlete, see how high they can jump, and much more.

GRRRL SCOUT

Nomad World Pub, Minneapolis
Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 11
$6
www.grrrlscout.com

A queer dance party held every second Saturday, this event is 21+. Although each event has different promotions and events, it's always a queer dance party with DJ Girl Named Jane. Follow Grrrl Scout on Facebook to hear about what is going to make each event unique. Everyone is welcome.

MINNESOTA REGIONAL POLE COMPETITIONS

Maplewood Community Center
Jan. 14–15
$60 All-Access Pass
www.poleandperformingart.com

Enjoy two days of workshops, free seminars, free food, prizes, and amazing performances by competitors across the region. Competitive divisions include women's, men's, and doubles.

SCIENCE FUSION

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
Jan. 14–Feb. 4
$13 adults, $10 children museum admission
www.smm.org

Now an annual four-part event series, Science Fusion focuses on the accomplishments of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

WINTER

WHAT TO DO



OUT THERE
Photo by Martin Argyroglo

Photo by Paula Court

members of the Twin Cities' African American, American Indian, Latino and Hispanic, and Asian American communities in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Adults and kids alike will learn through interactive displays and presentations from scientists and educators at leading Twin Cities companies.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

Quatrefoil Library, Minneapolis
First meeting of 2017 is Jan. 19
Free
www.queermasculinity.com

The Twin Cities Queer Masculinity group will be meeting every third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. for consciousness raising discussions. Consciousness Raising meetups are discussion-oriented, examining and exploring lived gender and sexual experiences from a queer masculine perspective.

GIRLPOND NIGHT LIVE

Quatrefoil Library, Minneapolis
Jan. 20
$10
www.lestalkgirlpond.com

Join the Scavos for a live podcast recording of an interview with featured guests Kat "the cuddlist" and Miss Rosie "trainee domme." The Scavos will chat with Kat and Miss Rosie about the similarities in their respective journeys/practices with regard to the concepts of self-awareness, boundary setting, and consent. Come at 6:00 p.m. to mingle, visit with the Scavos and guests, peruse the Quatrefoil library, sample Kat's cuddling, and do some adult coloring. Podcast recording begins at 7:00 p.m. Proceeds to benefit Quatrefoil Library.

WINTER FROLIC

North West Fur Company Post, Pine City, MN
Jan. 21
$10
www.sites.mnhs.org

Shake off the winter blues by heading outdoors at the Fur Post. Visitors can learn about winter travel during the fur trade and join in activities like tossing a curling stone, playing a round of Ojibwe snow snake, or snowshoeing along two miles of trails. Guests can also relax indoors, enjoy a cup of cocoa before a blazing fire and watch the outdoors festivities from the visitor center.

LAVENDER NIGHT AT THE THEATRE

Chanhassen Dinner Theatre, Chanhassen
Jan. 26
$55 dinner and show tickets with promo code Lavender17
www.chanhassendt.com

Join a group of *Lavender* readers and take in the sights and sounds of *Camelot*! Use our promo code for a discounted rate, but enjoy a top-rate dinner and performance. Come along to the idyllic kingdom of Camelot. Revel in the rich, deeply romantic legend of King Arthur and his beloved queen, Guinevere. Celebrate the dashing Sir Lancelot, the gallant Knights of the Round Table, the mystical wizard Merlin and the Lady of the Lake from the mists of Avalon.

TWINSFEST 2017

Target Field, Minneapolis
Jan. 27–29
$20 adults, $10 children
www.minnesota.twins.mlb.com

As the largest annual fundraiser for the Minnesota Twins Community Fund, TwinsFest features numerous interactive activities and behind-the-scenes fan experiences that



CABIN FEVER DAYS

Photo courtesy of Winehaven Winery and Vineyard

celebrate Twins baseball and Target Field. New to this year's event, the Metropolitan Club will host TwinsFest's first-ever beer garden.

THE GREAT NORTHERN

Minneapolis and St. Paul
Jan. 27–Feb. 5
Price varies by activity
www.thegreatnorthernfestival.com

Event leaders from the City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival, the 130-year-old Saint Paul Winter Carnival, and the U.S. Pond Hockey Championships combined to create The Great Northern, a collaborative winter festival. Led by Eric Dayton of Askov Finlayson and in partnership with Northern Spark and Andrew Zimmern's Food Works Inc., the organizers have joined forces to celebrate winter together. The three foundational organizations represent a combined 152 years of history and tradition. This exciting partnership will further enhance Minnesota's reputation as a national destination for winter activity at its best. Sponsored by Target, The Great Northern will showcase signature events alongside new winter programming across Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

The Great Northern is a nod to Minnesota's history and its Great Northern Railway, which was built by local entrepreneur James J. Hill and connected Minneapolis and Saint Paul with the West Coast. The festival name also recognizes Minnesota's distinct Northern geographic position in the U.S.

The festival will celebrate Minnesota's winter season with a wide-range of programming, with the opportunity to layer on additional elements in the years to come. By leveraging existing events to start, the festival is anticipated to draw more than 350,000 attendees in its first year.

ART SLED RALLY

Powderhorn Park, Minneapolis
Jan. 28
Free
www.artsledrally.com

A mass sledding spectacle inspired by the history of mass winter events at Powderhorn Park that began around a hundred years ago.

LAKE HARRIET WINTER KITE FESTIVAL

Minneapolis
Jan. 28
Free
www.minneapolisparks.org

Kites of all shapes, sizes, colors and themes will fly over frozen Lake Harriet. Minnesota Kite Society experts will demonstrate their skills maneuvering spectacular kites throughout the day. Bring your own kite, or buy an inexpensive one at the lake.

WINTER ADVENTURE FAMILY DAY

Forest History Center, Grand Rapids
Jan. 28
$10
www.mnhs.org

Make the most of winter by heading outdoors to snowshoe, cross-country ski, ride bullet sleds down a groomed hill and launch snowballs with a giant slingshot. Throughout the day guests can enjoy music, a vintage ski exhibit, carnival games, presentations with live animals and sleigh rides to see the logging camp under winter conditions.

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WINTER

WHAT TO DO

OMNIFEST

Photo courtesy of the Science Museum of Minnesota



ICE CASTLE
Photo by AJ Mellor

WINTER

WHAT TO DO

WINTERTIDE

Public Functionary, Northeast Minneapolis
Jan. 28–Feb. 11
Free
www.nemaa.org

A bi-annual juried exhibition produced by Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA), Wintertide was created to highlight NEMAA member artists' high level of professional artistic capability. Come celebrate the bounty of outstanding artwork that NEMAA artists have to offer — a bright light in Northeast during the coldest time of the year. Vote for your favorite for "Audience Choice," announced at the closing reception.

POLAR BEAR PLUNGE

Various Cities
Jan. 28–March 18
Raise a minimum of $75
www.plungemn.org

A unique opportunity for individuals, organizations and businesses to raise money in support of Special Olympics athletes by jumping into frigid Minnesota waters.

2017 RED BULL CRASHED CE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

St. Paul
Feb. 3–4
Free
www.redbullcrashedice.com

The sport of ice cross downhill (a mix of downhill skiing, skating, and roller derby) continues with a visit to St. Paul as the sport continues to grow in popularity with U.S. fans.

MYTHIC CREATURES

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
Feb. 3–April 16
$13 adults, $10 children museum admission
www.smm.org

Visitors will explore the natural and cultural roots of some of the world's most enduring mythological creatures. From mermaids to dragons and griffins to unicorns, the exhibit reveals the relationship between nature and legend. Using models, fossils, modern cultural objects, and interactive technology, visitors will dig into the stories behind the alluring mythic creatures that continue to fascinate us.

VALENTINE'S DAY TC 5K

Lake Harriet, Minneapolis
Feb. 11
$30 individual, $50 couple
www.tcmevents.org

Twin Cities in Motion presents the Twin Cities' oldest winter running event. Open to couples and singles, "relationship status" backtags make the perfect icebreaker.

VICTORIAN POETRY SLAM

James J. Hill House, St. Paul
Feb. 14
$12
www.mnhs.org

Celebrate Valentine's Day the old-fashioned way by enjoying classic 19th-century poetry in the elegant drawing room of the James J. Hill House. Actors, wearing 1890s eveningwear, will perform a wide range of humorous and stirring poems by Emily Dickinson, Poe, Longfellow, Browning, and more dealing with love, romance, temperance, sports, and war. Audience members are also invited to bring a short

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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Victorian poem to read aloud throughout the evening.

PENUMBRA THEATRE AT 40: ART, RACE AND A NATION ON STAGE

Minnesota History Center, St. Paul
Feb. 18–July 30

Since 1976, Penumbra Theatre has ignited dialogue and social action in the Twin Cities and beyond by presenting original, compelling works grounded in the history of African American artistic expression and social justice. This exhibit explores the history of this storied theatre, from before there was a Penumbra, to the founding years during the Black Arts Movement, to the international recognition it has today. This dynamic exhibit will feature artifacts, multimedia and performance.

WINTERFEST

Target Field Legends Club, Minneapolis
Feb. 24
$75 individual night, $135 two-night package
www.mncraftbrew.org

Winterfest is a true showcase of Minnesota craft beer, featuring nearly 100 Guild member breweries. Winterfest 2017 will debut at Target Field in Minneapolis. In addition to unlimited sampling of specialty and seasonal beers, patrons will enjoy upscale catered food, craft beer education and music.

2017 WISHES & MORE WINTER BALL

Marriott City Center, Minneapolis
Feb. 25
$175–225
www.wishesandmore.org

The theme for 2017 is "Sparkles and Spurs." Join the fun for an evening of bidding, dining, and dancing. Proceeds benefit Wishes & More, an organization which enhances the life of a child fighting a terminal or life-threatening condition by providing extraordinary experiences including wishes, scholarships, memorials, and more.

GRUMPY OLD MEN FESTIVAL WABASHA, MN

Feb. 25
Fishing contest is $5 for adults, $3 for kids
www.wabashamn.org

Ice fishing contest, ice shacks 'n' Plaid Parade, cribbage tournament, bingo, minnow races, Annual Grumpy Plunge, hotdish luncheon and more.

FUR FLEE 10

Superior, Wisconsin
March 2–5
$85 registration fee, plus hotel
www.ncbears.com

What began so many years ago has grown to become the premier bear event in the upper Midwest! Reach into the vaults with this one to celebrate high points of years gone by, as well as some great new features that are sure to be a hit. New for 2017 are shuttles, Bloody Mary bars, open bar after-parties, 10th anniversary celebrations, and more, in addition to the usual features of Fur Flee that you've come to expect.

MINNESOTA ROLLERGIRLS CHAMPIONSHIP

Roy Wilkins Auditorium, St. Paul
March 3
$18
www.mnrollergirls.com

Cheer on the Minnesota RollerGirls as they fight for the championship. Don't miss your chance to see who will raise the Golden Skate.

OMNIFEST 2017

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
March 3–May 4
$8 first film, 15% discount on additional films
www.smm.org

Get a front-row seat to experience larger-than-life adventures! Omnifest 2017 will bring five giant films to the Omnitheater's nine-story domed screen — both audience favorites and a brand new feature. Titles include *A Beautiful Planet*, *Mystery of the Nile*, *Everest*, *Search for the Great Sharks*, and *To the Arctic*. All films will run in a daily rotation. Visitors may choose their favorite film, or see all five in one day! With a diverse film lineup that will appeal to all ages and interests, it is an ideal family destination this winter.

BOCK FEST

Schell's Brewery Grounds, New Ulm, MN
March 4
$10
www.schellsbrewery.com

An all-outdoor event on the grounds of Schell's Brewery, featuring the release of the seasonal bock beer, with food and other drink. The Bock Fest Boys play all day, so come party with 5,000 other "festive" souls and head downtown afterward! Always held, no matter the weather, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., this event is only open to 21+, with most of the crowd between 25 and 45.

CABIN FEVER DAYS

Winehaven Winery, Chisago City
March 4–5
Free
www.winehaven.com

Got cabin fever? Come and taste some vintage selections brought out of hibernation for this special event. This is the only event of the year where visitors can taste, and purchase, Winehaven's classics that have been aging in the cellar for years. There is no fee for admission and reservations are not required; bring your friends!

DUCT TAPE DERBY

Mount Kato, Mankato
March 12
$5
www.mountkato.com

Build a sled of only cardboard, duct tape, zip ties, stickers, and paint. Prizes are given out for the sled that goes the farthest, most unique sled, and the best all-kids sled. Spectators are welcome and encouraged. Mount Kato will have food and drinks on site, along with a toasty warm fire, so bring a whole group and make a day out of it!

MAPLE SYRUP 101

Forest History Center, Grand Rapids, MN
March 14
$10
www.mnhs.org

Learn how to tap sugar maple trees and make maple syrup. A local syrup producer will show how to tap the trees, collect sap and perform a simple boil-up to produce excellent syrup.

HOT DASH 5K & 10 MILE

Minneapolis
March 18
$20–$60
www.tcmevents.org

The Hot Dash 5K & 10 Mile is for tough Minnesotans to reward themselves for running through the winter and celebrate the great state of Minnesota with friends. Judging for best lumberjack costume, Minnesotan, and winter beard competitions will take place at the event. Following the race, keep the fun going at the post-race beer garden.

HISTORY HAPPY HOUR: MINNESOTA BREWERIES

Alexander Ramsay House, St. Paul
March 30
$25
www.mnhs.org

Have a beer with your friends at the Ramsey House while learning about the history of Minnesota breweries. Join Andrew Gieske, a certified beer judge and craft beer enthusiast, for a look at the past, present and future of brewing in Minnesota. Ticket price includes 2 drinks, snacks, presentation, and time to mingle in the mansion. ■

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The 360-degree bar is one of the many centerpieces of Punch Bowl Social.

Punch Bowl Social for Indoor Fun

Adult children of the world, unite! We finally have a place to hang out with other adults while not actually having to act much like adults. Punch Bowl Social at the edge of St. Louis Park's West End has 24,000 square feet for folks to nibble, tipple, laugh and play their way well into the wee hours. If Chuck E. Cheese grew a beard, got a couple tatts and developed a taste for craft cocktails and grass-fed burgers, he'd fit right in at Punch Bowl Social. Hell, he'd probably run the place.

The space itself is sprawling, festooned with three bars, an arcade full of billiard tables, bowling alleys, and karaoke rooms, while simultaneously serving up a menu sure to sate the food-iest among us. The latest of eight locations around the country, Punch Bowl is the brainchild of founder and CEO Robert Thompson. *Top Chef* contestant and judge Hugh Acheson brings serious eat cred to the team while mixologist Patrick Williams is on board to pack some serious hand-crafted adult punches. The decor is equally delicious and snarky without being too self-aware. Walking through the door, your eyes feast first before your stomach gets the chance.

And it will get the chance. In spades. As I learned firsthand on a chilly winter's night with friends a few weeks back.

Punch Bowl's menu, in format and flavor, is as eclectic as its decor. And wide open as its space. The scratch kitchen offers up everything from casual crowd-pleasing apps to genteel gastro-diner plates. Brunch, burger night, or birthday party, you've got plenty of ways to play at Punch Bowl Social.

Of the ample apps, we marveled at the heft of the black-eyed pea hummus. Rich and creamy, it paired perfectly with the fresh tomatoes, cukes, radishes, and kettle chips that accompany. The cocoa-dusted pork carnitas street tacos were so good, we were happy to learn you can order four or eight, depending on your willingness to share. Let's be real, order eight. And you're not sharing.

Everybody is doing a burger and Punch Bowl Social is no different. Their tribute to the now trend-heavy hamburger honors and elevates its simpler, fast food-ier roots. Cue the jingle: "Two grass-fed patties, Comeback sauce, lettuce, cheese…" Bonus points: my burger was cooked a perfect medium;





Clockwise from top left: Bonzini, an eight-person foosball table from Italy; the burger with fries; a cozy space for lounging between bowling alleys; confit ribs with fries and slaw.





CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

One adult milkshake and three preschool drinks: a Malted Maple Royale of whiskey, ice cream, and candied bacon; the Ginger Rogers with cucumber, pear, and lemon and ginger shrub; a grapefruit soda; and Jeanette's with strawberry syrup, lime juice, and aloe vera juice.



a preference I find all-too-rare of late. The only things better than the burger were the hand-cut, slightly overcooked-for-extra-crunch fries. Yummeh.

The table shared two of the signature gastro-diner plates. These thoughtful dishes heighten traditional favorites. What happens when you confit ribs? Magic. And the confit St. Louis ribs are truly magical. This half-rack of tender belly ribs quite literally melts off the bone; an unctuous party of pork in your mouth. Not to be outdone, the Idaho trout roasted atop succotash and dressed with a lemon salsa verde made me completely rethink my general proscription against ordering fish whenever red meat is an option. The piquant cabbage slaw side is a perfect counterpoint to the richness of the ribs.

Let us not forget the punch nor bowl in Punch Bowl Social. Craft cocktail and mocktail lovers alike have much to make merry over. And that merrymaking can take place over a literal punch bowl. Signature craft punches can be ordered in singles, as well as four or eight serving bowls. The Bachelor's Bowl is a true stand out, combining bourbon, blackberry elderflower liqueur, pineapple guava tea, lemon juice, and simple syrup. The "preschool" line of mocktails made for a particularly potable dinner pairing. The Chef's Cup of seltzer, muddled cucumber and lemon with house made cardamom syrup was a personal favorite.

Ever the sign of a successful journey across a new menu, my companions and I longed for a chance to return and attempt a number of other stand out dishes that captured our interest. Along with a chance to belt out a few ABBA hits in the karaoke rooms or bowl a couple of games. Or just people watch. I'm telling you. You're going to be spending a lot of time at Punch Bowl Social in the next year. Have a blast. ■

PUNCH BOWL SOCIAL
The Shops at West End
1691 Park Place Blvd., St. Louis Park
763-400-3865
www.punchbowlsocial.com/location/minneapolis





Left to right: Black-eyed pea hummus; the namesake drink of the place: The Bachelor's Bowl, a punch bowl of booze to share.

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JANUARY PROMOTIONS

Aggressive Wine Sale
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GIANTS RIDGE
Photo by Paul Pluskwik

WHAT TO DO

FROM BUNNY HILL TO MOUNTAIN TOP: NATIONAL LEARN TO SKI AND SNOWBOARD MONTH

By Shane Lueck

Hollywood loves to romanticize winter sports: snow bunny couples skiing down the hill, warming up with a hot chocolate in the chalet, and maybe hitting the slopes again before the screen goes black. Turns out, that idyllic image isn't far from reality here in Minnesota.

The 18 members of the Minnesota Ski Areas Association have made it their passion to turn people who are new to skiing or snowboarding into lifelong lovers of the sport. With January being National Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month, there is no better time to leave the house and grab a spot in one of their group or individual lessons.

Denny Cunningham, a ski instructor at Wild Mountain in Taylors Falls, Minnesota, has been skiing for more than 40 years, but he had a rocky start. "My first-day attempts were quite embarrassing," he says. "My only instructions were rather brief in the rental shop as I was struggling to put my boots on. The learning area was a little hike from the chalet across the top of two other runs. I decided it would be easier to put my skis on rather than walk carrying them, which turned out to be a big mistake. My direction seemed to be more down the slope than across the slope, and soon I decided to just 'go for it.' Not my best decision, I lost track of the number of times I fell before reaching the bottom."

But times have changed. Wild Mountain offers one-hour lessons for first-time skiers and snowboarders, introducing guests to basic skills for a successful first experience on the snow-covered hills. "For those who have decided they would like to take the next step and become more confident on a variety of slopes, we offer a progressive learning experience in our Get Hooked on Skiing or Snowboarding program," Cunningham says. "Designed for first time skiers or boarders only, the program includes three days of lift and rental along with two hours of coaching on each of the days for only $129. Upon completion of the program we have a graduation present: a complimentary season pass for the remainder of the season."

The same attention to the learner's needs is a passion of Luke Williams, Snow Sports Director at Elm Creek and Hyland Hills in the metro area. "If you've never skied before, we'll get you up on the slopes either skiing or snowboarding," he says. "We will have a lesson that will fit your needs and ability level."

Williams says, on average, someone new to the slopes will take two or three lessons (that last an hour and a half) before they're ready to be safe and comfortable on the hills by themselves. "Somebody that plays hockey or soccer, or rollerblades, those are three sports that the cross-over skills are very similar," he says. "Ice

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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skating and rollerblading, for example, have very similar foot-to-foot movements that a skiing person would have. Somebody that wakeboards or skateboards, those cross-over skills help them out if they're going to be snowboarding; they're very similar movement patterns for what they're going to be doing."

In general, Williams believes skiing is easier to learn at the front-end, but harder to refine once you get into the sport, whereas snowboarding is harder to learn at the beginning but easier as it goes on. But Cunningham says the learning process actually begins in the rental area, before even touching the snow.

"Fitting the guest with boots and skis properly is a very important first step; it can make or break that first experience!" he says. "After meeting your instructor and other guests in the lesson, the instructor will introduce you to your equipment, the different parts of each piece and their function, how to put the skis and snowboard on and how they have been designed to make your learning experience easier."

Following some work on flat ground, the group will move to a small hill to apply some of the skills picked up thus far. But don't be afraid that the lessons will progress too quickly; both Cunningham and Williams express a commitment to meeting learners where they are, and keeping a pace that they are comfortable with. "We take everything nice and easy, move at the pace of whatever the student or group is at," Williams says. "We spend time on the bunny hill, making sure they're comfortable turning and stopping."

But for some, the worry begins before even making it to the ski area. Winter sports like skiing and snowboarding have long been associated with the wealthy. Often cast as an expensive sport, Cunningham says that's not the case. Equipment rentals are readily available, taking the edge off of buying new equipment; and coupons, packages, and specials throughout the season make saving money even easier. The price of a lesson, for example, includes the instructor's time, lift ticket, and the equipment rental, making an entire afternoon on the slopes cost less than $50. During Learn to Ski Month, Wild Mountain's ski lessons will be offered at only $10, and at Elm Creek and Hyland Hills, Williams says learners get a complimentary lift ticket and rental after completion of a three-lesson series.

Aside from cost, many adults are hesitant to strap on a pair of skis because of the common rhetoric of people skiing their entire lives. But Cunningham says most adults who begin taking lessons do so at the encouragement of family, friends or coworkers. He shares, "A long-time middle-age office employee working at Wild Mountain used to look out the window and wonder aloud, 'What do all those people see in skiing?' Over time, she began to make note of the fun they appeared to be having, and soon was wondering if she would be able to ski. With a little encouragement and an occasional lesson she is now a avid skier, if you can call 100-plus days a season avid!"

According to Cunningham, the two biggest arguments he hears about skiing are looking foolish or getting hurt. In both cases, taking a lesson goes a long way toward a successful outcome. "When you see a skier or snowboarder coming down the slope arching effortless, graceful turns down a steep challenging slope, he or she more than likely started in the same place as you." he says. "As for chance of injury, I could give you statistic after statistic showing snow sports to be safer than most other sports or even day-to-day activities. My best advice: take a lesson and practice safe skiing or riding."

Following a day in the snow, warm up in the chalet, relaxing with friends over food and drink. What sounds better than sitting by a fireplace sipping on some hot chocolate? ■



WILD MOUNTAIN
Photo courtesy of Wild Mountain

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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2017 Honda Ridgeline









Let us settle an argument, shall we?

Define the word "truck" for a moment. Traditionally, a truck would be best described as a vehicle built on a frame with its body components tacked onto it and the ability to haul items with competence of mass weight. That would describe anything from a pickup truck to a heavy duty tractor-trailer.

However, most manufacturers have a different definition for "truck." For sales reporting purposes, a "truck" also includes SUVs, crossovers, and sometimes minivans. It appears that this definition holds sway when they talk about sales volume and growth within the segment.

Let us go back to the traditional definition of "truck." What we have here is the new-for-2017 Honda Ridgeline. It appears to be a pickup truck, which will position itself against the mid-sized rivals of the Toyota Tacoma, Chevrolet Colorado, GMC Canyon, and Nissan Frontier. Most traditional truck people will tell you that it is not a pickup truck, despite having a bed behind the four-door cab. It is because it is (a) built off of a car-based platform and (b) the cab and bed units are integrated into a unit body construction. These two facts are considered blasphemy to traditional truck people.

Here is another thought: we have had car-based "trucks" before. Remember the Chevrolet El Camino and Ford Ranchero? They were based on cars, such as the Ford Torino and Chevrolet Chevelle from that bygone era, but offered the space and utility of a truck bed attached to a single "cab." Of course, trucks weren't considered big business back then as they are now. They were sold for commercial purposes. The El Camino and Ranchero were mainly sold for leisure buyers. This was about 45 years ago.

Today, trucks are money-makers. When Honda introduced the Ridgeline for 2016, traditional truck folks laughed at it. However, there were those of us who bought them because they were not as intimidating as traditional trucks and they offered more creature comforts (even in the bed) than their cab/bed/frame counterparts. In fact, I found out that it was a pickup truck that found favor with GLBT customers. Yes, we buy traditional pickup trucks also, but those who bought the Ridgeline liked the friendlier vehicle to use as it offered the right amount of hauling capacity and capability needed to augment our lives.

When the new Ridgeline was being shown, we saw that Honda went with a more traditional pickup truck design. The big question was construction. Lo and behold, Honda retained the unit body construction that traditional truck buyers refuse to accept. In the eyes of the rest of us, it shows that we can have our pickup truck cake and eat it too.

The 2017 Honda Ridgeline shown comes in one configuration: a crew cab with a short bed attached. In fact, all Ridgelines come with the same cab/bed configuration. The Ridgeline shares the same platform as the Honda Pilot SUV. This makes sense as these two vehicles are built on the same Lincoln, Alabama assembly line.

The bed itself measures 64 inches in length with the tailgate up. That measures just about where a lot of "short bed" pickups are. What is unique about the tailgate is the way it opens up, either pulled down or opened off of the side. A latch on the right side of the tailgate can be opened to let it swing open. One unique feature on the Ridgeline is the In-Bed Trunk. It is an extra compartment that can be used to stow tools securely or as an ice chest for a tailgate party. Don't worry about the latter, since there is a drain plug at the bottom of the "trunk."

The "cab" part of the Ridgeline shares some of the Pilot's look. The grille and front bumper are different, distinguishing the Ridgeline from the Pilot. The roofline follows more pickup truck convention with its upright rear window area, leading to the bed. While most mid-sized pickups were shooting for longer, leaner design, the Ridgeline is upright and purposeful; both traits worth looking at, especially in terms of cab accommodations.

Our tester was the top-of-the-line Black Edition. This is the embodiment of attitude, with black paint, wheels, trim, interior and so forth. If this is not your thing, there are six other trim

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

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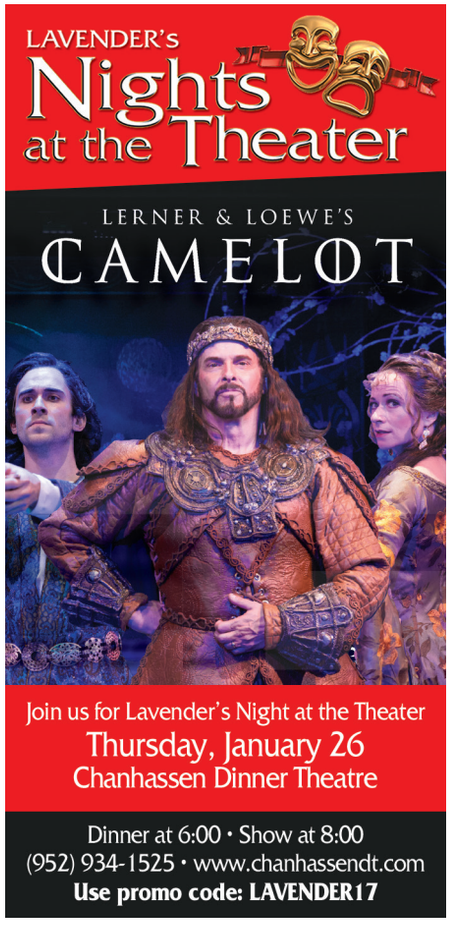
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levels to choose from on the Ridgeline.

The Pilot SUV also serves as the basis for the Ridgeline cabin. The instrumentation binnacle is directly out of the Pilot, featuring a digital speedometer, an information screen and two sets of dials off to the side. All of these are easily readable. All of the switches and the entire center stack are also out of the Pilot. This is great for continuity's sake, but it does evoke mixed reactions, depending on whether they are truck people or not. In all, this setup is very functional, but one must be careful with the plethora of switches below the instrument panel's beltline.

The wide center console works with a rear transmission lever. This is bolstered by some big front seats that offer comfort and some support. In the Black Edition, the perforated leather is accented with red finishes. There are also red accents and backlights all around to match the interior motif. While the front seats offer comfort, there is a great amount of headroom not found on some of the Ridgeline's mid-sized pickup competitors. Rear seat leg room is OK for average-sized people. Also, the rear doors do not swing wide enough for some people to enter and exit from the back seat. The rear seats can also be lifted up to provide an enclosed cargo hold for a few things.

The infotainment system is standard Honda fare, with HondaLink driving this connected set-up. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto can be connected through one of the USB ports in the cabin, along with Bluetooth connectivity with a smartphone. Using the HondaLink app provides additional app use and a connection to schedule service visits for this pickup. The Ridgeline already offers a set of solid speakers inside the cab, however it also offers a Truck Bed Audio System controlled by a smartphone app. This is not only perfect for parties outside, but for Pride parades, too!

The Ridgeline is powered by the same V6 engine found on some of Honda's vehicles (including Acura), the 3.5-liter V6 Earth Dreams engine. With 280 horsepower and 262 pound-feet of torque on tap, this slips right into the mid-sized pickup pack for six-cylinder power. The engine runs smooth, just like an SUV or minivan. This engine runs through a six-speed automatic transmission with a choice of front- or all-wheel drive. Our Black Edition tester was equipped with all-wheel drive with Intelligent Traction Management. The latter piece enables the AWD system to switch to Snow, Sand, and Mud modes.

When dealing with a pickup truck, you have to discuss numbers. There are two specific numbers a truck customer must focus on: Payload and Trailer Capacity. The payload number might surprise you: 1,499 pounds of capacity in the small bed out back. This also includes the In-Bed Trunk. Also, the Ridgeline has a maximum towing capacity of 5,000 pounds. In all, this is a 4,599-pound unit body pickup truck that can actually do the job of its mid-sized rivals.

Another important number is fuel economy. In this Ridgeline, we were able to average 20.5 MPG.

One thing we found on the Ridgeline is its driving dynamics. Compared to the Pilot, the lack of an enclosed rear compartment makes the Ridgeline livelier to drive. This will change when you start putting on up to 1,499 pounds of stuff out back. Because of its construction, there is a feeling of stability with the cab and bed conjoined, even with an integral "frame." The ride quality is good, with some suspension action on bumps and expansion joints. The handling is a bit more controlled with cornering kept to minimal roll and lean action.

Though the steering action is OK, there seems to be a lot of activity from lock-to-lock at the wheel. It does lend to a soft on-center feel and some vagueness felt on turns. Braking is actually quite good, though the pedal feels a bit squishy. The Ridgeline stops very well in normal and panic situations.

This Ridgeline Black Edition tester came with the suite of Honda Sensing active safety features. These features include a Lane Keeping System, Adaptive Cruise Control, Collision Mitigation Braking System, and a Road Departure Mitigation System. The Ridgeline also includes blind-spot monitoring, Honda LaneWatch, a multi-view rear-view camera with cross-traffic alert.

For the base Honda Ridgeline RT, pricing starts at $29,475 with front-wheel drive. Our AWD Black Edition tester came with a sticker price of $43,770. For $1,500 less, the RTL-E offers the same equipment level as the Black Edition, but with more colors available, chrome accents, and a not-so-black interior.

The Honda Ridgeline is an interesting proposition; however, it will not settle the debate whether it is a truck or not. The key numbers are there, with payload that is greater than most mid-sized pickups, a better ride quality, and cab headroom not seen in the latest competitors. It also offers the most useful bed with the trunk and an audio system. These are unique qualities that make the Ridgeline a compelling product for both truck and non-truck customers to consider.

However, one must come to a conclusion. Most truck people would probably not want a Ridgeline. For the rest of us, this could be a solid and fun pickup to use anytime, anywhere. ■

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St. Paul, MN 55114
(612) 861-7115
www.mnadopt.org

ADVOCACY

Rainbow Health Initiative
Committed to advancing the health and wellness of LGBTQ communities through research, education and advocacy.
2021 E. Hennepin Ave., Ste. 220
Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 206-3180
www.rainbowhealth.org

AIDS/HIV INFO & TREATMENT

Aliveness Project, The
Community Center for Individuals Living with HIV/AIDS – On-site Meals, Food Shelf and Supportive Services.
3808 Nicollet Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55409
(612) 824-LIFE (5433) www.aliveness.org

MN AIDS Project - AIDS Line
Statewide referral service for HIV information & resources including testing, care services, education around PrEP.
2700 Territorial Rd.
St. Paul, MN 55114
Metro: (612) 373-AIDS,
Statewide: (800) 248-AIDS
mapaidsline@mnaidsproject.org
http://www.mnaidsproject.org

U of MN HIV Research Studies
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420 Delaware St. SE
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(612) 625-7472
hiv.umn.edu

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clinic555.org

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(651) 645-0478
www.familytreeclinic.org

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www.namihelps.org

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(612) 729-2543
www.qlibrary.org

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610 Rarig Center
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(612) 625-3500
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www.visitduluth.com

A FEW WORDS | BY PATRICK BOLAND

20 Rules for Forming a #Squad



1. Assemble approximately four to eight other gay men. Make sure everyone who isn't in the group hates himself on a daily basis.
2. Depending on your age group, refer to each other as characters from *The Golden Girls* or *Pretty Little Liars*. Preferably both. Shut up, Blanche.
3. Make sure one person in your group knows nothing about pop culture. Destroy that person.
4. Make sure there's romantic history that threatens to tear all of you apart at any moment, usually on Saturday nights, so you can go to brunch, which is a form of kindergarten peace-making for grown men.
5. Mimosas.
6. Mimosas.
7. Mimosas.
8. Sometimes Bloody Marys. But no.
9. Bottomless mimosas.
10. Themed parties. Coordinate costumes.
11. Use gifs, memes, and emojis, because words are for the weak.
12. Take shirtless photos. What better place than the grocery store?
13. Do the same fitness class together because it's what our founding fathers would have wanted.
14. #gay #gayboy #instafamous #abs #model #malemodel #malemodels #malemodelzzz #wordassociation #ionlywork40hourweeksandhavenothingbettertodo #squad #asquad #bsquad #isthereacsquad? #questions #slay
15. Make sure the prettiest member of the group hates himself.
16. Never bring carbs to a party. Unless it's the party of another squad.
17. Travel to other cities. Be better than them. Snapchat your faces from the plane.
18. Actually, Snapchat everything.
19. Ensure your group photo has the most likes on Facebook.
20. Remember that most of us felt alone for the beginning half of our lives. You know your #squad has your back. Make sure they know you have theirs. ■



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